



Humanity
Research
Consultancy

Local insights, global impact

It is Not Humane to Clean Human Shit:

**Report on the Systematic Prevalence of Forced Labour in
the Form of Manual Scavenging in India**



Author: Deeksha Sharma
May 2021



Humanity Research Consultancy (HRC) is a social enterprise providing expert supply chain investigation, training and consultancy services to governments, NGOs, and corporations. HRC's local evidence-based insights empower policymakers to end forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking, globally. Connecting clients to experts from more than 50 countries, HRC specialises in providing local culturally sensitive insights, nuanced field investigation and research.

It is Not Humane to Clean Human Shit: Report on the Systematic Prevalence of Forced Labour in the Form of Manual Scavenging in India

Author: Deeksha Sharma

Suggested Citation: Sharma, D. (2021). *It is Not Humane to Clean Human Shit: Report on the Systematic Prevalence of Forced Labour in the Form of Manual Scavenging in India*. Humanity Research Consultancy, United Kingdom.

Humanity Research Consultancy Limited is a UK registered company.

Company Registration number: 12195368

Copyright Humanity Research Consultancy

— All rights reserved.

Acknowledgements

This research demonstrates one of the most blatant human rights violations with the existence of forced labour in the form of manual scavenging. This report has helped enhance my knowledge and perspectives around forced labour in India and understand what has become better and worse in the past two decades (2000-2020).

I express my sincere gratitude to the following in helping me complete this research:

Humanity Research Consultancy

National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, New Delhi

Sheela, female manual scavenger working in New Delhi

Executive Summary

*“In India, a man is not a scavenger because of his work.
He is a scavenger because of his birth...”*

— Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Indian social reformer, jurist, and politician

The dehumanising omnipresent yet “invisible work” done by manual scavengers in India is a blatant violation of their human rights and is a classic example of what International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines as culturally sanctioned forced labour. Under the international and national laws, the Indian Government is obliged to protect right to life and dignity of people engaged in the practice of manual scavenging (MS) and protect them from worst forms of human rights violations.

This report has presented the developments concerned with MS in India in the past 20 years (2000-2020), understanding what became better and worse in terms of laws, stakeholder mapping and media engagement.

With the beginning of the two decades in year 2000, interventions to end MS have scaled up, with the last decade (2010 onwards) witnessing significant escalation in legislations and activism. The research study has drawn and synthesised data in local languages- Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, etc. to develop a grounded approach in understanding local insights for global impacts. Email interview from the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), New Delhi along with a brief interview of a female manual scavenger working in the city have been taken, which has helped provide deeper understanding on the prevalence of the despicable practice.

While the law banning MS has been in force since more than two decades now, those responsible for its implementation (namely the government officials, bureaucracy, municipalities) have been employing people to clean excrement, sewers, and septic tanks with impunity.

This report is significant in adding to the scarce authentic literature on MS, highlighting the intersections of caste, gender, and labour. Though this hereditary caste-based forced labour is culturally sanctioned and socially approved by communities, this report has vividly pointed towards the lack of political will to end MS. However, legislations have picked up pace along with increased civil-society engagement and we can anticipate seeing an end to this modern slavery very soon. Therefore, this report envisions to keep the national and international community engaged in the issues of forced labour, calling for their concerted efforts to end MS in India.



Picture 1: Manual Scavenging is a caste-based form of forced labour and servitude that compels the manual scavengers to clean excrement and sewers

List of Abbreviations

BPL	Below Poverty Line
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MoHUA	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
MS	Manual Scavenging
NCSK	National Commission for Safai Karamcharis
NSKFDC	National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEMSR Act	Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act
RLBs	Rural Local Bodies
SBA	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SKA	Safai Karmachari Andolan
SRMS	Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers
SSC	Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge
ST	Scheduled Tribe
ULBs	Urban Local Bodies

Table of Contents

1. Introduction to Manual Scavenging in India	8
1.1 Understanding the Context and Magnitude of the Problem	9
1.2 Abusive Working Conditions	11
1.3 Continuous Discrimination	13
1.4 Severe Health Consequences	13
2. The Legal Framework: Trend of Policy and Law	15
2.1 International Human Rights Law	16
2.2 National Laws Upholding Human Rights of Manual Scavengers	19
3. Trend of Media Coverage and Angle: Media's Response to the Issue	22
3.1 Capturing the Severity of the Practice Through Media's Lens	23
4. Stakeholder Mapping	27
4.1 Related Government Agencies	28
4.2 NGO Efforts: Unending Activism to End Manual Scavenging	32
5. Conclusion	34
6. Recommendations	37
7. Appendices	40



Introduction to Manual Scavenging in India

1.1 Understanding the Context and Magnitude of the Problem

The International Labour Organisation Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)¹ defines forced labour as *“all work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”*² According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Report in 2016 by the ILO and Walk Free Foundation, 24.9 million people were made to work as forced labourers by individuals, groups or by state authorities.³

Manual scavenging is the dehumanising practice of manually cleaning and handling of human excreta from dry latrines, sewers, septic tanks, railway lines, etc. with basic tools, where the person comes in direct contact with human and animal faeces.⁴

Manual scavengers belong to caste groups that are relegated to the bottom of the caste hierarchy. They face intense social pressure to do work assigned to them on basis of being born into a certain caste. This reinforces the social stigma of purity and pollution, designating them as ‘untouchable’, leading to further oppression and widespread discrimination. *In India, there are over five million people employed in sanitation work, with around two million of them working in ‘high risk’ conditions.*⁵

Around 2.6 million individuals are employed to clean human excreta from community and individual latrines every day.⁶ 95 percent of these toilets are cleaned by women (mostly in villages) and men (mostly in urban areas) do physically demanding work of cleaning septic tanks, gutters, and sewers and are paid slightly better than women⁷, exhibiting the intersection of caste and gender.

¹ The International Labour Organisation Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Available at:

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029 (Accessed: 29 September 2020)

² International Labour Organisation, Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

³ Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, 2017

⁴ Safai Karamchari Andolan, Available at: <https://www.safaikaramchariandolan.org/>

⁵ Kanoria K. (2018) ‘The Six Personas of Manual Scavenging in India’, *The Wire*, Available at: <https://thewire.in/labour/the-six-personas-of-manual-scavenging-in-india> (Accessed: 5 October 2020).

⁶ Accessed from the Safai Karamchari Andolan Home Page

⁷ Human Rights Watch (2014) Cleaning Human Waste “Manual Scavenging,” Caste, and Discrimination in India. *Human Rights Watch*.

Women from lower castes are made to clean dry latrines, mostly in the villages in India, where they carry human faeces in a cane basket from house to house and are paid 2 rupees a day to clean a dry latrine (amount may slightly vary depending on location/place).⁸

With around 34% Indians living in urban areas⁹, it is imperative to have proper sewer systems in the cities, however, more manual scavengers die cleaning sewers and septic tanks in urban areas.

Despite laws and policies forbidding manual scavenging, they are not put into real practice to eliminate it. From the 6th of December 2013 to 31st of January 2020, a total of 62,904 manual scavengers have been identified under National Surveys.¹⁰ According to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis¹¹ (NCSK), data from 194 districts of 18 states in the past five years, 376 people have died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks, with 110 deaths in the year 2019¹². On average, this means one death reported every five days.

Further, according to NCSK, 631 people died cleaning sewers and septic tanks in last 10 years (2010-2020)¹³. Responding to an email interview for this study, the NCSK presented with figures from a 2018 survey conducted by the National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development (NSKFDC)¹⁴ (also see Appendix 1). Though their response is critical in understanding the prevalence of MS in India, skewed figures make it difficult to analyse the situation. Data in government surveys and other reports contradict in terms of people engaged in this work which makes it difficult to address the gravity of the problem. Failure in identifying number of manual scavengers results in poor redressal measures.

⁸ WaterAid India (2020) *Double Discrimination: Dalit Women in Manual Scavenging*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6d8cfBvR3w> (Accessed: 20 November 2020)

⁹ The World Bank (2018). United Nations Population Division. World Urbanisation Prospects: 2018 Revision. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=IN>

¹⁰ Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2020), Government of India, Lok Sabha, 11 February 2020

¹¹ The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis is a statutory body that recommend specific programs, evaluates programs implementation while making recommendations to the central and state governments on policy matters affecting Safai Karmacharis, including reporting annually to the Parliament.

¹² Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2020), Government of India, Lok Sabha, 11 February 2020 (Accessed: 28 September 2020)

¹³ *The Hindu* (2020), '631 People Died Cleaning Sewers, Septic Tanks in Last Ten Years: NCSK' Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/631-people-died-cleaning-sewers-septic-tanks-in-last-10-years-ncsk/article32652733.ece> (Accessed: 8 October 2020).

¹⁴ National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC) Government of India Undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment that conducts surveys and collects data on Safai Karamcharis

SN	State/UT	Manual Scavengers as per Survey 2018
1	Andhra Pradesh	1982
2	Assam	542
3	Bihar	0
4	Gujarat	108
5	Haryana	0
6	J&K	0
7	Jharkhand	201
8	Karnataka	1754
9	Kerala	600
10	Madhya Pradesh	562
11	Maharashtra	7378
12	Punjab	142
13	Rajasthan	2590
14	Tamil Nadu	62
15	Telangana	00
16	Uttar Pradesh	19712
17	Uttarakhand	6033
18	West Bengal	637
	Total	42303

Table 1: Figures of manual scavengers submitted by NCSK/NSKFDC in response to this study (see Appendix 1)

1.2 Abusive Working Conditions

The ILO committee in 2019 observed that women (mostly in villages) who are engaged in manual scavenging are often paid with food (including leftover food)¹⁵. They work under coercion and face threats of violence, harassment, denied access to community resources and often face expulsion from the village if they try leaving this filthy work. On the other hand, men (mostly in urban areas) enter the oxygen-deprived sewers and manholes without any safety gears or protection, since they face socio-economic pressure, manual scavengers are forced to do this work owing to lack of alternate livelihood opportunities.¹⁶

¹⁵ International Labour Organisation (2019). Direct Request (CEACR) - Adopted 2018, Published 108th ILC Session (2019). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/F?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:3958312 (ACCESSED: 8 OCTOBER 2020)

¹⁶ Aamir Ali, S.M. (2019) 'Manual Scavenging: Intersection of Caste and Labor', *International Journal of Law*, 5(5), pp. 29-33

Involuntariness	Menace of Penalty
Hereditary or caste-based form of forced labour	Withholding and non-payment of wages
Work performed under coercion of an employer	Exclusion from the community/ village/ social life
Deception/ false information about type of work	Threats of violence and harassment
Abusive working conditions	Deprivation of food and other necessities
Contractors force manual scavengers to clean sewers and septic tanks	Sexual violence
Forced to work without safety gears or protection	Threats of physical violence
	Debt-bondage/ rely on higher caste people for resources, denying work can result in restricted or no access to community resources

Table 2: ILO indicators identifying forced labour in manual scavenging¹⁷

In an interview¹⁸ (quoted below) with a female manual scavenger, *Sheela*, in New Delhi, it was noted that contractors withheld wages of workers, while forcing them to work daily with the promise of paying later. Lack of alternate employment opportunities restricted Sheela to leave the work.

“I don’t know when my first payment will come. He (contractor) said he will pay later. I will get my money someday. I do this work with the hope that it can help me earn some money for my children. I lost my job in a school because of the Coronavirus pandemic.”

— Sheela, female manual scavenger, New Delhi, November 2020
(In an interview with Deeksha Sharma, Research Fellow, Humanity Research Consultancy)

¹⁷ ILO Indicators of Forced Labour, Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL), International Labour Organisation, Geneva

¹⁸ The interview was conducted keeping in mind the national COVID-19 guidelines, with appropriate PPE and safety precautions. (Unlock 5.0 measures were taken)

1.3 Continuous Discrimination

The children of manual scavengers are also trapped under this hereditary-based forced labour, where they are often pushed to work in the same profession as their parents'. They are often marginalised and face discrimination in schools from teachers and other children. Further, they are forced to clean school premises and a lot of these children drop out of school at early ages.¹⁹

Most manual scavengers depend on landlords and other higher caste people to get access to land for shelter, to graze livestock or collect firewood. Denial to execute caste-based forced-work often restricts their access to community resources and social life. This leaves little choice for them but to return to MS.

1.4 Severe Health Consequences

According to the Safai Karmachari Andolan²⁰ (SKA), a non-profit organisation and a movement aiming to end MS from India, 429 deaths occurred in Delhi alone from 2016 to 2018²¹. Its reports claim nearly 2000 deaths in India annually by MS in sewers, owing to poisonous gases. Disturbingly, most men entering sewers and septic tanks die before the age of 60.²²

This work exposes the scavengers to poisonous gases, causing damage to their cardiovascular, respiratory, and reproductive organs. Additionally, they suffer from nausea, breathlessness, rashes, hair loss, other infections, and diseases²³.

¹⁹ Malik, M.; Noronha, K.M.; Singh, T. (2018) *Centre for Policy Research*. Available at: <https://www.cprindia.org/research/reports/manual-scavenging-india-literature-review-annotated-bibliography> (Accessed: 17 October 2020)

²⁰ SKA is a non-profit organisation founded by Bezwada Wilson in 1994. Available at: <https://www.safaikarmachariandolan.org/>

²¹ Desai, D. (2020) '282 deaths in last 4 years: How Swachh Bharat Mission failed India's manual scavengers', *The Print*, Available at: <https://theprint.in/india/282-deaths-in-last-4-years-how-swachh-bharat-mission-failed-indias-manual-scavengers/354116/> (Accessed: 12 October 2020)

²² ScoopWhoop (2016), *In Deep Shit*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gRwDfxVL8&t=1648s> (Accessed: 25 September 2020). The documentary highlights the abhorrent practice of MS in urban areas

²³ Derived from documentaries of stories of women who left MS under the Rashtriya Grameen Abhiyan 2001. Inside sewer lines, the decomposition of garbage and faecal matter increases levels of methane, hydrogen sulfide, carbon monoxide and ammonia which reduces oxygen levels and causes hypoxia that can lead to immediate death

Sadly, continuous discrimination owing to belonging to lower castes, deprives the manual scavengers of various healthcare services among other government welfare schemes – Public Distribution Systems²⁴ (PDS), Anganwadi services²⁵, etc. Poor government data on female manual scavengers deprives them of various amenities and resources.



Picture 2: A woman cleaning excrement from a private household in a village, with basic cleaning tools like a broomstick and a bucket; making herself susceptible to serious health issues²⁶

Safai - Cleanliness

Karamchari - Worker

Translation of 'safai' and 'karamchari' from Hindi to English

²⁴ The public distribution system is an Indian food security system established under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution. It evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices

²⁵ Anganwadi is a type of rural child-care centre in India. These centres provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition, and health education, immunisation, health check-up and referral services of which the last three are provided in convergence with public health systems

²⁶ Gupta, P. (2018). '88% Women Manual Scavengers Rehabilitated, Claims Centre', *Shethepeople.tv*. Available at: <https://www.shethepeople.tv/news/rehabilitate-women-manual-scavengers/>, derived from Metrovaartha



The Legal Framework: Trend of Policy and Law

2.1 International Human Rights Law

To raise awareness for human rights and end caste-based discrimination, various international instruments have guided India to end forced labour pertaining to manual scavenging. The ILO committee in 2019²⁷ recognised the culturally sanctioned practice of manual scavenging and called for immediate government measures to ensure manual scavengers leave this work at their own will, under full protection from any form of coercion amounting to forced labour.

Guiding International Instruments to Eliminate Manual Scavenging

- **Articles 1& 23- Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR):**
mandate dignity and equality, fair remuneration, and social security measures
To eliminate abhorrent practice of manual handling and cleaning of excrement and restore human rights of workers
- **Articles 3, 7, 10, 11 & 13- International Convention for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):**
envision equality, dignity, decent living standards for women
To ensure dignity, equality and decent standard of living for manual scavenging communities
- **Articles 2, 3, 6 & 26- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):**
prohibits discrimination to envisage a free, equal society- respect for life and liberty
To end caste-based discrimination and eliminate manual scavenging
- **The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):**
eliminate violence and discrimination against women
To end violence against women who manually clean dry excreta from villages and railway tracks

Picture 3: Self compiled data from resources available in the public domain

India has signed six out of the eight fundamental ILO Conventions²⁸ to end forced labour and set labour standards. Further, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise ending of various deprivations with strategies to reduce inequality and end discrimination. The SDGs are critical in guiding a way towards ending MS in India, especially SDG Target 8.7,

²⁷ International Labour Organisation (2019) *Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2018, published 108th ILC session (2019)*. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:3958312 (Accessed: 8 October 2020)

²⁸ India is signatory to Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (along with its 2014 Protocol); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 13); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The non-ratification of ILO Conventions No.87 & 98 is due to certain restrictions imposed on the Government servants in India

directing immediate and effective measures to eliminate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking.



Picture 4: SDGs associated with ending the practice of manual scavenging



Picture 5: Urgent attention from the international community is crucial to ending the hazardous practice of manual scavenging²⁹

²⁹ ScoopWhoop (2016), *In Deep Shit*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gRwdDfxVL8&t=1648s> (Accessed: 25 September 2020)

Year	Key Efforts to End Manual Scavenging
1993	The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act
2000	National Commission for Safai Karamcharis submits its first report to Parliament - ineffective 1993 Act
2001	UN World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa. Caste described as descent-based discrimination.
2002	At 27th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery urges India to implement the 1993 Act
2004	The Planning Commission develops a national action plan - end manual scavenging by 2007
2007	ILO's 96th Session releases "Equality at Work" report, also mentioning manual scavenging
2011	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment - new national level survey to identify manual scavengers National Human Rights Commission releases report, "Know Your Rights: Human Rights and Manual Scavenging."
2012	European Parliament passes a resolution criticising caste-based discrimination in India
2013	Parliament passes the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR Act)
2014	Supreme Court directs states to implement 2013 Act, alternate employment opportunities
2020	Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Table 3: Key national and international efforts to end manual scavenging

2.2 National Laws Upholding Human Rights of Manual Scavengers

The Indian Constitution under article 15³⁰ and article 17³¹ bans caste-based discrimination and untouchability respectively, along with other articles³² that are instrumental in preserving human rights of its citizens. Government intervention to abolish MS is crucial to undo the socio-economic injustice done to the backward communities, modernise sanitation and punishing officials and private households that employ manual scavengers.

1. The Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribes Amendment Act 2015³³ (SC/ST Act)

The SC/ST Act was enacted to prevent atrocities against the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). This Act is also known as Prevention of Atrocities Act. Section 3 of the SC/ST Act contains provisions pertaining to prohibition of manual scavenging. Further, compelling people from SC/ST backgrounds to do MS and dispose or carry human or animal carcasses is an offence under the act. Additionally, publicly abusing people, especially harassing, or exploiting SC/ST woman is punishable under the law. This provision safeguards the women belonging to the MS communities, however, despite this, continuous discrimination, and marginalisation of these women, makes them susceptible to increased harassment and abuse.

Many administrative programs accompanied the legislative measures to improve India's sanitation system while generating alternate livelihood opportunities for MS communities. For instance, the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers³⁴ (SRMS) was introduced in January 2007 (revised in 2013) for assisting the rehabilitation of the manual scavengers in alternate occupations. However, it could not achieve the aims with which it was introduced owing to its poor implementation and lack of will to rehabilitate the manual scavenging communities.

³⁰ Article 15, The Constitution of India, 1950 prohibits discrimination on basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth

³¹ Article 17, The Constitution of India, 1950 abolishes untouchability in all its forms

³² Article 14 (Right to Equality); 21 ((Protection of Life and Personal Liberty); 23 § 24 (Protection against exploitation, forced/bonded labour); 46 (State shall protect educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, especially the Sc/ST and protect them from social injustice and exploitation)

³³ Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2015) The Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribes Amendment Act, Government of India. This Act replaced the ordinance of 2014

³⁴ The SRMS was introduced with the objective of rehabilitating manual scavengers and their dependents in alternative occupations by March 2009. Available: <https://nskfcd.nic.in/en/content/self-employment-scheme-rehabilitation-manual-scavengers-srms>

II. The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR Act)

Manual scavenging was prohibited in 1993 under an Act³⁵ which got amended in 2013. On September 6, 2013, the Indian Parliament passed The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013³⁶ to end MS and committed to “rehabilitate” people engaged in this work. This law further aimed at strengthening the accountability mechanisms and increase efforts to end discrimination and protect dignity of manual scavenging communities.³⁷ The PEMSAR Act prohibits construction of dry latrines and manual handling and cleaning of excrement, while also banning cleaning sewers, gutters, and septic tanks without protective gear.³⁸

Supreme Court Judgement built on 1993 and 2013 PEMSAR Act

Under Sections 11 and 12, “persons included in the final list of manual scavengers..., shall be rehabilitated in the following manner”:

- (a) *“one time, cash assistance, ...”*
- (b) *“their children shall be entitled to scholarship ...”*
- (c) *“they shall be allotted a residential plot and financial assistance for house construction, ...”*

The Supreme Court urged local authorities to take immediate steps to rehabilitate workers and mechanise sanitation work.

Table 4: Supreme Court judgement built on 1993 and 2013 PEMSAR Act³⁹

³⁵ Ministry of Labour and Employment (1993) The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, Government of India

³⁶ Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2013) The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, The Gazette of India, No. 25 of 2013, Government of India

³⁷ Mehra, M. (2020) *Death by excreta: The cursed lives of India's manual scavengers*, Available at:

<https://www.sabrangindia.in/article/death-excreta-cursed-lives-indias-manual-scavengers> (Accessed: 3 October 2020)

³⁸ The PEMSAR Act, 2013, chapter III, section prohibits construction of insanitary latrines and employment and engagement of manual scavenger.

³⁹ Indian Kanoon (2014) *Safai Karamchhari Andolan And Ors vs Union Of India And Ors on 27 March, 2014*. Available at:

<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/6155772/> (Accessed: 4 November 2020)

Manual Scavenging Act 2013	Provisions under Section 5, 7, 8 and 9
Section 5: Prohibition of insanitary latrines and employment and engagement of manual scavenger	1. No person, local authority or any agency shall, (a) construct an insanitary latrine; or (b) engage or employ, either directly or indirectly, a manual scavenger, and every person so engaged or employed shall stand discharged immediately from any obligation, express or implied, to do manual scavenging.
Section 7: Prohibition of persons from engagement or employment for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks	No person, local authority or any agency shall, from such date as the State Government may notify, which shall not be later than one year from the date of commencement of this Act, engage or employ, either directly or indirectly, any person for hazardous cleaning of a sewer or a septic tank.
Section 8: Penalty for contravention of section 5	Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 5 or section 6 shall for the first contravention be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees (USD 687 approx.) or with both
Section 9: Penalty for contravention of section 7	Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 7 shall for the first contravention be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to two hundred thousand rupees (USD 2747 approx.) or with both

Table 5: Provisions under Sections 5, 7, 8, and 9 of Manual Scavenging Act 2013

However, the Act has not succeeded in eradicating MS. While no proper data is available on the practice, the scarce official statistics contradict each other. Despite this, with the proposed PEMSR (Amendment) Bill⁴⁰, there is scope to impose strict penalties and increase imprisonment term for violation of the law.

⁴⁰ Thekaekara M. M. (2020) 'Why the Proposed Manual Scavenging Prohibition Bill Looks Good Only on Paper', *The Wire*, Available at: <https://thewire.in/caste/manual-scavenging-prohibition-bill-2020-caste-rehabilitation> (Accessed: 27 September 2020)



Trend of Media Coverage and Angle: Media's Response to the Issue

3.1 Capturing the Severity of the Practice Through Media's Lens

While laws and government policies coupled with stupendous efforts of various NGOs and civil society organisations have an impact, media's contribution (as fourth pillar of democracy) to ending MS cannot be undermined. Prior to the past two decades media's voice was not very powerful to bring light to the issue of MS, however, its response became more agile after the passing of the 2013 PEMSAR Act. By providing a platform for the NGO's, organisations, and individuals working to end MS, media played a crucial role in striking a positive change within the communities in response to this practice.



Picture 6: Bezwada Wilson (left) in conversation on manual scavenging with Bollywood actor, Amir Khan (right) on *Satyamev Jayate*, Ep.10, 8 July 2016

News, interviews, TV shows, and documentaries have helped spread awareness and provoke action on social media. For instance, Bollywood actor, Amir Khan, highlighted the practice and plight of MS on his TV show (in the local language- Hindi) *Satyamev Jayate*.⁴¹ Various Ted-Talks and interviews including those of the activist Bezwada Wilson have been conducted to help people grasp the lived experiences of manual scavengers.

⁴¹ *Satyamev Jayate* (2016), *Untouchability*, Ep. 8. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxqkJPak5Xk&t=2264s> (Accessed: 22 September 2020). The documentary interviews the Human Rights Activist, Bezwada Wilson, Founder SKA. It was conducted in the local language, Hindi

These talks have played a significant role in reaching wider audience in the society – general people as well as the MS communities who earlier have remained ignorant to their own rights. Further, such platforms have increased community engagement and provoked dialogues on human rights issues and the importance of decent work.



Picture 7: ScoopWhoop (Chase Episode 12), 5 November 2016: In Deep Shit, highlighting the abhorrent practice of manual scavenging in urban areas

Additionally, few documentaries and short movies –*Kakkoos*, meaning toilet in Tamil language (picture 8)⁴², and *In Deep Shit* (picture 7)⁴³ have portrayed the seriousness of the problem. For instance, *In Deep Shit* vividly showed how manual scavengers cleaned open drains with bare hands and no safety equipments. These documentaries have sparked awareness and reached out to the young people in the country. Telugu activists like Joopaka Subhadra, who herself had worked as manual scavenger, depicted the discrimination she faced through poetry and novels.⁴⁴ Her work has specially inspired women from Dalit

⁴² LeftSide Media center (2017), *Kakkoos*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UYWRoHUpkU> (Accessed: 24 September 2020). This documentary explains MS in Tamil Nadu and raises issues of ostracisation & discrimination with the Dalit communities.

⁴³ ScoopWhoop (2016), *In Deep Shit*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gRwdDfxVL8&t=1648s> (Accessed: 25 September 2020)

⁴⁴ In 2017, Joopaka Subhadra described her experiences working as a manual scavenger with the Telangana state government through her writings. Her family did not accept her as she had worked (out of compulsion) as a manual scavenger for 10 days. They claimed that she stunk of her work.

backgrounds and she further established Mattipoolu (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, and minorities) Women Writers' Forum. While her own family did not accept her for briefly working as a manual scavenger, it was through her works that she gained more support to stir the conscience of people towards the Dalit and other backward communities. Since the 2013 legislation, the Wire⁴⁵ undertook an initiative, #Grit, that covered MS and sanitation, exploring their linkages with caste, gender, policy, and apathy.



Picture 8: Kakkoos (meaning 'Toilet' in Tamil language) documenting MS in Tamil Nadu; raises issues of ostracisation & discrimination (2017)

⁴⁵ [The Wire](https://www.thewire.in/) is an online news and opinion website

The last decade has seen an uplift in the visual media displaying practice of MS. A few big news channels like Rajya Sabha TV and NDTV India have also occasionally covered this issue in their debates, however, a more dedicated approach and efforts are needed on their part.



Picture 9: Debates on manual scavenging on Rajya Sabha TV, operated by the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament/ Council of States).⁴⁶ Second from the right is Bezwada Wilson, National Convenor of SKA (2018)

⁴⁶ Rajya Sabha TV (2018), *The Big Picture- Stop Manual Scavenging*, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=p-Rh4R_COKo (Accessed: 22 September 2020)



Stakeholder Mapping

4.1 Related Government Agencies

I. Government Ministries

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has frequently undertaken objectives of identifying technological and business innovations to replace human intervention in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

The NCSK has been monitoring programs to eliminate MS since last three decades. However, its authority is restricted to information collection and advisory functions. In the email interview with the NCSK, the commission responded poorly in answering on themes of caste and gender, however, it displayed a positive approach towards eliminating MS (check appendix 1).

Central Government Ministries	Tasks Allocated (in line with manual scavenging)
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	- Town and Country Planning; matters relating to the Planning and Development of Metropolitan Areas - The Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi - Responsible for the Smart Cities Mission
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	- Rehabilitation in alternative occupations - Awareness generation, research, evaluation and training regarding subjects allocated to the department <u>Also responsible for:</u> National Commission for Safai Karmacharis, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation

Ministry of Rural Development	• Providing livelihood opportunities to those in need including women and other vulnerable sections with focus on Below Poverty Line (BPL) households • Capacity development and training of rural development functionaries
Ministry of Women and Child Development	• Formulates plans, policies, and programmes; enacts/ amends legislation, guides and coordinates the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the field of Women and Child Development

Table 6: Tasks allocated to central government ministries to end manual scavenging

II. Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge⁴⁷ (SSC) Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA)

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Clean India Mission is a centrally sponsored policy, which aims to achieve safe, sustainable, cost-effective and “universal sanitation coverage”, making India “open defecation free”.

The SBA (urban) under the MoHUA launched the Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC) from 19 November 2020 to 15 August 2021 to implement the ban on hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks under the PEMS Act 2013; eliminate open defecation and ban the use of plastic.

Following are the key highlights of the SSC:

- This initiative sets timelines and challenges for cities to adopt technological solutions along with safety measures
- Launched a toolkit to evaluate cities on their performance indicators. Cities will be awarded points based on their performance
- Set aside 200 points for citizens empowerment: 24*7 helpline (50 points) + public awareness campaigns (150 points)
- 400 points for mechanised cleaning

⁴⁷ Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge is a MoHUA initiative to wholly implement the PEMS Act 2013, and mechanise sanitation, making the work more safe and technologically viable. It aims to improve sanitation efforts in the cities, evaluating them based on various parameters.

- Allocated 60 points for capacity building training/ skill development of safaimitras/ workers engaged in cleaning of septic tank/sewer lines
- 20 points for empowerment of safaimitra rehabilitation of informal safaimitras – linking with social welfare schemes, ration cards, education for children etc.
- 30 points for rehabilitation of informal safaimitras – linking with entrepreneurship/ livelihood opportunities

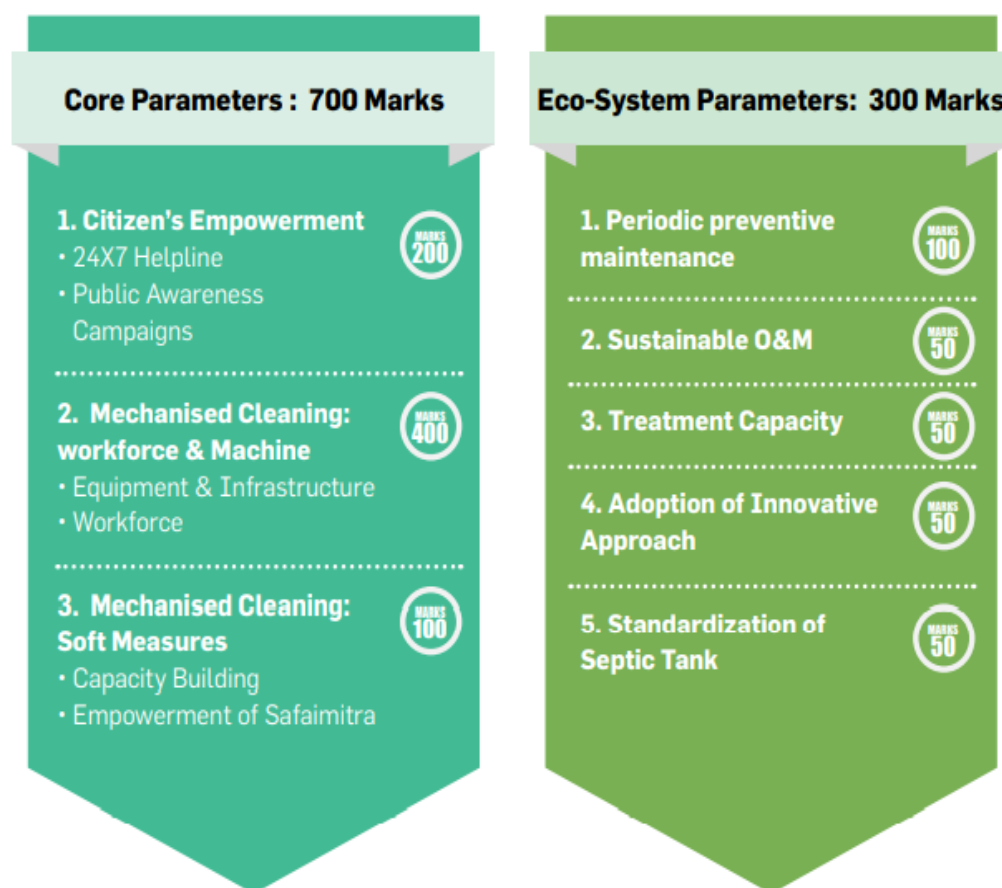


Figure 1: The SSC Performance Parameters (cities with maximum marks will be winners) (adapted from SSC Toolkit)

III. Municipalities/ Local Bodies (ULBs) and Panchayats/ Rural Local Bodies (RLBs)

The employment of manual scavengers by the government indicates its callous attitude towards ending the practice. RLBs and ULBs had been employing people to clean human excrement in large numbers since past two decades. Contractors and private households employ and threaten men to clean manholes in urban areas, amounting to forced labour.

With MS becoming illegal and a non-bailable offence under the PEMS Act 2013, local officials and private households now fear legislations. However, according to the National Advisory Council, *“almost no one has been punished under this law.”*⁴⁸ Additionally, the Indian Railways is the largest employer of manual scavengers who clean human excreta from railway tracks.⁴⁹ This indicates the two-faced attitude of the government (where it directly employs people into MS in the name of “sweeping”).

However, as demonstrated in the previous section, the government, with the help from ULBs and RLBs and citizens’ participation, is strengthening efforts to eliminate MS since the past decade. For instance, under the SSC, the MoHUA has empowered the ULBs to monitor, evaluate and transform the cleanliness efforts in the cities. Therefore, concerted efforts between government stakeholders and concerned ministries – Ministries mentioned in Table 6 along with Ministries of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Rural Development, Railways, Labor, and the National Institution for Transforming India or NITI Aayog is paramount.

“I did not clean the toilets for just one day. They came to my house and told me, “If you do not come, we will throw you out of the village. You will have nowhere to go.”

— A woman in Kasela Village, Uttar Pradesh, in an interview⁵⁰ with the Human Rights Watch, 2014

⁴⁸ Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2012-2013), Report on The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Bill 2012, Thirty Second Report, March 2013, Available at: <http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Manual%20Scavengers/SCR%20Manual%20Scavengers%20Bill.pdf> (accessed August 3, 2014)(citing National Advisory Council resolution dated October 23, 2010), para 1.5.

⁴⁹Roy, S. (2016) ‘The not-so-swachh life of the Railways’ cleaners’ *The Hindu*, Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/The-not-so-swachh-life-of-the-Railways%E2%80%99-cleaners/article14623426.ece> (Accessed: 2 November 2020).

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch (2014) Cleaning Human Waste “Manual Scavenging,” Caste, and Discrimination in India. *Human Rights Watch*. Human Rights Watch interview with a woman in Kasela village, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh, January 19, 2014.

4.2 NGO Efforts: Unending Activism to End Manual Scavenging

Over the years, various civil society initiatives, NGO's and organisations have condemned the practice of MS while making efforts to restore the dignity of the Dalit communities.

- The **Sulabh International Social Service Organisation**⁵¹ founded by Bindeshwar Pathak in 1970, critically focusses on transforming India's sanitation systems, with the important innovation of the twin-pit pour flush toilets all over India.
- Founded in 1989 by Martin Macwan, **Navsarjan** in Gujarat has set up Dalit Shakti Kendra for providing vocational training along with other skills to Dalits.⁵² This has become instrumental in ending the exploitation and humiliation caused by this filthy work. They have been successful in mobilising and organising meetings and training programmes for the marginalised and oppressed communities.
- Since more than three decades now, the founder and national convenor of **Safai Karmachari Andolan** (SKA), Bezwada Wilson⁵³, has been one of the most vocal advocates for complete elimination of MS. He founded the SKA in 1994 with the goal to end MS and rehabilitate those engaged in the practice into more dignified and decent work.
- In 2014, the under reporting of numbers of manual scavengers was reiterated by the Supreme Court in the SKA case⁵⁴ stating that the government ***“has shown remarkably little progress and has identified only a miniscule proportion of the number of people engaged in manual scavenging”***.

⁵¹ The organization has pioneered the construction of the twin-pit, pour-flush compost toilet called *Sulabh Shauchalaya*, a model that doesn't require manual cleaning.

⁵² Navsarjan, Dalit Shakti Kendra, Available at: <http://navsarjan.org/dalitshaktikendra> (Accessed: 7 November 2020).

⁵³ Bezwada Wilson is the national convenor of the SKA. He's a human rights activist working on issues of caste and is a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award

⁵⁴ Safai Karmachari Andolan & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors., Supreme Court of India, Writ Petition (Civil) No 583 of 2003, judgment, March 27, 2014, para. 10

- **Jan Sahas**⁵⁵ founded by Ashif Sheikh in 2000, started the *Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan*⁵⁶ to encourage manual scavengers to voluntarily “liberate” themselves from the iniquitous practice. They started a nation-wide solidarity march to end MS. Around 10,000 women left MS with this campaign and started the ‘National People’s March for Eradication of Manual Scavenging’ march in November 2012, reaching Delhi in January 2013. The march covered 18 Indian states and 200 districts in two months that and significantly contributed to the release of the “Delhi Declaration for Eradication of Manual Scavenging,” which urged the government to pass a new legislation to end MS.

Activists educate communities about MS being a caste-based work and help them know about their legal and fundamental rights. They encourage community solidarity and collective action to eliminate this practice.⁵⁷ Therefore, a surge in the level of activism has been seen in past 20 years (2000-2020), which have directly and indirectly impacted legislations around MS.

“Rather than first making sure that toilet pits are emptied by machine, SBA is just pushing for building more toilets. Mechanisation is possible but they do not want to do that.....Caste system and mindset never allow the brain to even think about cleaning [a septic tank and sewer] because we think that it is a Dalit or scheduled caste activity.”

— Bezwada Wilson in an interview with Rajya Sabha TV (in 2018), expressing his dissatisfaction with SBA ⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Jan Sahas is a non-profit that works to eliminate sexual violence and forced labour, focusing on the marginalised social groups through a comprehensive approach of- Prevention, Response, Rehabilitation and Systemic Reform.

⁵⁶ Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan (National Campaign for Dignity) was started by Ashif Sheikh in 2000. Through Jan Sahas, he has launched campaigns to end caste-based discrimination and manual scavenging in India, along with other socially challenging issues.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch (2014) Cleaning Human Waste “Manual Scavenging,” Caste, and Discrimination in India. *Human Rights Watch*, pp. 35.

Solidarity from liberated women villages and continuous support from Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan has empowered women to stand against caste discrimination and exploitation.

⁵⁸ Rajya Sabha TV (2018), *The Big Picture- Stop Manual Scavenging*, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-Rh4R_COKo&t=3s (Accessed: 24 September 2020).



Conclusion

This report has exhibited what has become better and worse in the past 20 years (2000-2020), significantly demonstrating the plight of manual scavengers. It has tapped into the depth of a sensitive human rights issue. However, the proposed Manual Scavenging Prohibition Bill, 2020 attempts to tighten legislations to curb the practice.

Modernising sanitation in India is crucial to ending manual handling of excrement by the marginalised communities. For instance, a Kerala-based start-up, Genrobotics, designed Bandicoot⁵⁹, a robotic scavenger that can eliminate MS. Further, the Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal provided 200 sewer cleaning machines to the skilled manual scavengers that could ensure cleaning of 30 feet deep manholes.⁶⁰ However, these machines require human intervention and are handed to the family of those who died cleaning the manholes.⁶¹ This clearly reflects how MS is seen to be the job of low castes, making it a hereditary-based forced labour.

Further, **despite technology and mechanisation are imperative to modernise sanitation, safety of the workers should become a priority.** Irrefutably, the past two decades are a witness to an incremental change in attitudes towards MS, owing to the grounded activism of dedicated non-profit sector in the country.

This trend of change from 2000 to 2020 has been coupled with various policies, bills and laws being brought up for prohibition of MS, with the second half of the two decades witnessing more paced-up efforts. The continued efforts of all stakeholders involved can have instrumental impacts towards ending this practice along with banishing socio-economic exclusion faced by these communities.

Therefore, despite the government is displaying the will to take the lead in eradication of manual scavenging, a reconstruction of governance framework is required with scaling up of interventions to end this modern slavery.

⁵⁹ A single unit of Bandicoot costs Rs 39.5 lakh - more than 40 times the average annual income of a rural Indian household.

⁶⁰ *The Times of India* (2019), 'Delhi CM flags off fleet of 200 sewer cleaning machines', Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-cm-flags-off-200-sewer-cleaning-machines/articleshow/68207367.cms> (Accessed: 8 November 2020).

⁶¹ Aamir Ali, S.M. (2019) 'Manual Scavenging: Intersection of Caste and Labor', *International Journal of Law*, 5(5), pp. 29-33

At present, in 2021, one can see remarkable improvement in the change in attitudes towards forced work of MS. With the next decade being pivotal in achieving the SDGs, the responsibility to end modern slavery will be challenging, yet rewarding.

Despite laws and policies in place, deaths caused due to working in sewers and septic tanks have not ended; women cleaning excrement still exists today and caste-based discrimination shamefully decides fate of MS communities.

However, from rise in increased awareness programs in the year 2000 to strengthening of legislations from 2013 and witnessing proposed amendments in PEMSAR Act in 2020, along with more rigorous civil society efforts, the trend of change is in the positive direction of completely eradicating MS from India.

A collective consciousness to end this derogatory practice has already begun.



Recommendations

I. Recommendations to the Government

1. Strengthen the implementation of existing laws with prime focus on the adherence to the PEMSAR Act, 2013; demonstrate efforts to implement the Prohibition of Manual Scavenging Amendment Bill, 2020
2. Efforts should be concentrated towards upliftment of the MS communities and providing them with alternate employment opportunities, ensuring education and training opportunities to the children of these communities.
3. Identify women and men engaged in this work to provide credible data⁶² for initiating reforms.
4. A gender-sensitive approach should be adopted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with constant assistance from the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
5. Mechanisation and investment in technology to modernise sanitation.
6. Need for decentralised governance: The Union Government should work with respective state governments in end MS. Panchayati Raj Institutions⁶³ (PRI), municipal bodies and local officials should become instrumental to effectively comply with laws and implement rehabilitation schemes.
7. Need for local officials to take immediate, proactive steps to identify people engaged in the practice.
8. Promote bio-toilets and increase contours of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

⁶² Credible data along with identifying manual scavengers, working in both rural and urban areas, is crucial to implement redressal measures along with making them access various government welfare schemes. Many remedy measures and rehabilitation schemes are for the “identified” manual scavenger. If government fails to identify people involved in this practice, this will deprive them of alternate livelihood opportunities.

⁶³ Panchayati Raj Institution is a system of rural local self-government in India

II. Recommendations to the International Organisations

1. Concerned international organisations should encourage the Government of India to uphold its commitments to end MS.
2. Provide technical assistance to national (especially the civil society organisations) and international projects, initiatives, and campaigns to assist the MS communities in leaving this work and rehabilitating them into more dignified and decent work.
3. Adopt a more gender-sensitive and intersectionality approach to design programs that will have immediate impacts on the MS communities.
4. Adhere to International Labour Organisation's recognition of MS as a culturally sanctioned practice in India, making this caste-based forced labour more widely read through the lens of modern slavery, while also supporting and conducting more rigorous research on MS.
5. Uphold the definition of discrimination based on work and descent as modelled on Article 1.1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which seeks to eliminate discrimination based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin.
6. Endorse the United Nations Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent.⁶⁴
7. The international organisations should promote regular consultation with civil society on caste-based discrimination and allocate adequate resources to civil society organisations for fighting caste-based work of MS.

⁶⁴ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2009) *Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent*, Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session11/A-HRC-11-CRP3.pdf>

Appendices

I. Appendix 1: Email Interview with NCSK

The following questions are designed to understand the prevalence of manual scavenging in India, for the purpose of a research study conducted under the Research Fellowship with Humanity Research Consultancy, London.

To be answered by the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, Government of India.

(Researcher: Deeksha Sharma (She/Her))

(Email Interview is chosen as the medium of interview, keeping safety precautions in mind owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic)

1. Which states have the highest and lowest prevalence of the practice of manual scavenging in India? Please provide state-wise data.
2. Please provide specific data on women working as manual scavengers in the country (i.e., involved in cleaning dry excrement from houses) and the number of people involved in the cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
3. While manual scavenging has been legally banned in the country, why does the practice still exist?
4. How has the commission been involved to curb the practice of manual scavenging in the country? How has it been instrumental in the implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act?
5. How many cases have been filed with the police or with the courts so far in response to the violation of the Act?
6. How hopeful can we be of the proposed Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2020? Do you think it will be instrumental in curbing this practice completely or is this just another piece of legislation?
7. Please provide NCSK's recommendations that will help eradicate the practice of manual scavenging from the country.

I would appreciate it if the commission could return the responses by the second week of November 2020.

Annexure

The responses to the points sent by Deeksha Sharma vide email dated 22.10.2020 is as follows:

1. NSKFDC is the Nodal Agency for Survey of Manual Scavengers. The State wise date of Manual Scavengers taken from the website of NSKFDC is as under:-

SN	State/UT	Manual Scavengers as per Survey 2018
1	Andhra Pradesh	1982
2	Assam	542
3	Bihar	0
4	Gujarat	108
5	Haryana	0
6	J&K	0
7	Jharkhand	201
8	Karnataka	1754
9	Kerala	600
10	Madhya Pradesh	562
11	Maharashtra	7378
12	Punjab	142
13	Rajasthan	2590
14	Tamil Nadu	62
15	Telangana	00
16	Uttar Pradesh	19712
17	Uttarakhand	6033
18	West Bengal	637
	Total	42303

2. The information is not centrally maintained/ compiled by this Commission.

3&4:- Manual Scavenging is prohibited under M.S. Act, 2013. The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis has undertaken vigorous correspondence with the respective Governments to ensure that the provisions of M.S. Act-2013, including complete ban on manual scavenging are implemented strictly. The Commission has made recommendations to Central Government to ensure mechanization of sanitation work and also been impressing upon States/ UTs to introduce mechanization so that manual scavenging could be eradicated.

5. This information is not centrally maintained by the Commission.

6. The State/UT Governments have a major role in implementation of the Provisions of M.S Act 2013 in order to ensure eradication of manual scavenging. Hence, a proactive approach on the part of respective State/UT is also primary to make the Law successful.

7. NCSK's recommendations are available in its Annual Reports which can be seen on Commission's website www.ncsk.nic.in.

.....

All images are free and are taken from [Pexels](#) (stock free photos), unless stated otherwise.